

THESES OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

MRS KORNÉLIA TÓTH VAS

**THE MEETING OF ART, SCIENCE AND CULTURE
IN THE SUBJECT MATTER OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY
BOOKPLATES**

**(The Hungary-related Bookplates of the Rudomino Library of Moscow in a
Hungarian and International Context)**

Eötvös Loránd University

Budapest

2013

I Definition of the research topic, its significance and timeliness

Images and their roles, effects and reception are among the central topics of the new discourses in the history of culture and art, evolving in the age of postmodernism. In the wake of the “iconic turn” a profound change has also ensued within the field of research, stressing modern pictorial techniques and the role of visibility. For this reason the interpretation of bookplates as visual documents is particularly timely today, and its research must gain fresh emphasis and points of view. The title of the present work: *The Meeting of Art, Science and Culture in the Subject Matter of Twentieth-Century Bookplates* refers to this too. Being of an *interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary nature*, the interpretation of bookplates as visual documents goes beyond examining the means of expression of fine art, while its analysis provides rich additional material to countless areas of our cultural and scientific life. In visual literacy, i.e. the “reading” and cultural reception of pictures, the cultural historical context plays an important role. Several branches of science are involved in the field of visual communication from the cognitive sciences through semiotics and art history to social sciences. It touches upon the theories of perception and culture and issues of cultural anthropology, content analysis and library science. The presentation of these trends in respect to bookplates signifies a novel approach and new method of examination.

From the turn of the twentieth century onwards a significant transformation took place in the function of ex-libris serving literally as bookplates. Freed from their attachment to books, they became “quasi ex libris”, that is, made for the sake of *collectors* and as additions to the graphic art collections of their owners. Nevertheless, the ex-libris kept their role of marking out the proprietor, and as an independent label of graphic art portraying the character of the maker (and graphic artist). As *the subject has not been duly researched in respect of the collectors and book(plate) owners* – an approach from the point of art history, graphic artists and different periods is more typical – I intend in my dissertation to lay emphasis on this novel angle, presenting new examination methods and concepts in the literature of the topic.

II Objectives of research and issues in focus

As indicated in the sub-title of the dissertation (*The Hungary-related Bookplates of the Rudomino Library of Moscow in a Hungarian and International Context*) my aim by exposing *the cultural historical connection* of bookplates and placing them within an

international context is to afford an overview of the twentieth-century cultural scene both in Hungary and abroad, and to outline a picture of the ex-libris practice including its institutionalised background (larger ex-libris societies, international collections, etc). Publicizing the concrete size of institutional bookplate collections (libraries and museums), followed by the narrowing down of the corpus of examination, the Hungary-related bookplates of the Rudomino Library of Moscow, as well as linking bookplates with the research of Hungarian civilisation has brought countless new concerns to the fore. The *investigation of ex-libris collectors with regard to entire collections* broadens the picture we have of twentieth-century cultural history from several different aspects, both in personal and institutional relations.

The specific object and corpus of examination of the present study is the *Hungary-related bookplates* (4585 graphic works) found in the *Department of Rare Books of the Rudomino All Russian State Library for Foreign Literature*. The opportunity to spend a month of studying in Moscow was granted by a Klebelsberg Kuno scholarship in 2010. The research of Hungary-related bookplates is aimed at Hungarian elements of geography, language, people and content, that is to say, at bookplates that are the works of Hungarian designers and/or were made for Hungarian owners and/or are in Hungarian and/or refer to Hungary in their content.

Further issues in the focus of the research are: *social and demographic examination* of the commissioners of the Hungary-related bookplates, presentation of their *occupation, age* and the *proportion of males to females*, as well as the relation of bookplates made for *institutions* vs. *private individuals*. Expounding on the nationalities and professions of non-Hungarian collectors and ex-libris makers with a connection to Hungarian bookplates is of great significance, as it directs our attention to the main points of connection with foreign countries. I'd also like to note that naturally I do not detach my research from the traditional approach to bookplates (portraying them according to designers and style); rather they complement the new aspects.

Therefore on one hand my purpose is to extend the theoretical framework of the topic found in the literature and to broaden the fields of Hungarian exlibrisology by raising bookplates into the corpus of scholarly research. On the other hand, as a standpoint that gains priority, I set an example of the aspects and potential methods of approach for further research by presenting the unit of a foreign collection and its methodological course from a Hungary-related aspect.

III Presentation of the literature relevant for the research topic and its place in the literature

In order to identify the collectors and makers of the Rudomino Library's Hungarian bookplates diverse and systematic work was necessary, which partly meant immersing myself in the literature and partly getting in touch with, consulting and collecting data from the experts of the field and the collectors, that is to say, resorting to primary and secondary resources alike. The bookplate collection of the Collection of Graphics and Small Prints of the National Széchényi Library, catalogued by the author, meant a diverse basis for research.

My work was aided by the following Hungarian and foreign (English, German, Italian, Russian, French, Danish, Finnish, Turkish, Polish and Slovenian) literature, sources and references:

1/ *Specialist literature, dissertations, theses, books, jubilee almanacs, Hungarian and foreign periodicals, specialist magazines, repertories, reference books, directories and registers, contemporary telephone directories, lists of subscribers, funerary records, death notices, small graphics catalogues, lists of writings, encyclopaedias and signature catalogues.* The main Hungarian and foreign locations of research were the following: National Széchényi Library, Library of the Hungarian Museum of Applied Arts, Somogyi Károly Municipal and County Library of Szeged, Méliusz Juhász Péter County Library and Cultural Centre of Debrecen, Zemplén Múzeum of Szerencs; Rudomino All Russian State Library for Foreign Literature (Moscow, Russia), Russian State Library (Moscow), Ex-libris Museum of the International Association of Book Collectors (Moscow), Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts (Moscow), IMOGA Graphic and Ex-libris Museum (Istanbul, Turkey), Işık University/Turkish University of Fine Arts (Istanbul), Finnish municipal libraries (Turku, Raisio), etc.

The literary background concerning terminological questions and the interpretation of bookplates is discussed in detail in my study dealing with theoretical issues "Az ex-librisek interpretációjának új irányai, ex-libris és hungarikakutatás" (New directions of ex-libris interpretations; ex-libris and Hungary-related research), published in my book *Szöveg-kép-emlék* (Text-Image-Memento), Gondolat Publishing, 2011. The decisive turn in the interpretation of ex-libris took place when from the function of indicating the possession of a book they became quasi ex libris, independent graphic sheets or label graphics (the former expression is from Oleg Lasunsky, the latter from Hilda Horváth). In the age of postmodernism – in the spirit of interdisciplinarity and visuality, i.e. the iconic turn – the

new directions of the interpretation of ex-libris is represented by W. J. Mitchell's *critical iconology* and G. Boehm's *Ikonische Wendung*. The examination of the narrative editing featured in ex-libris is made possible through employing Gadamer's ontological hermeneutics notion of reading, by interpreting ex-libris as graphic epigrams. Iconological and typological interpretation of ex-libris is equally feasible from the aspect of the owner (individual and institutional) or their stylistic elements (heraldic, symbolic and typographic). The inter-referential interaction between text and picture introduces further strands of the interpretation of the pictures, of visual literacy.

The other direction of my research is to present the history and development of the genre of ex-libris, in particular the changes taking place in the second half of the twentieth century, which constitutes the historical background to the corpus of the study, the Hungary-related ex-libris material in Moscow.

The continuous interest in bookplates and the topicality of the genre is indicated by the fact that in the course of the twentieth century several scholars brought the subject to light in various publications - principally in the periodicals *Kisgrafika Értesítő* (Small Graphics Bulletin), *Kisgrafika* (Small Graphics), *Magyar Iparművészet* (Hungarian Applied Art), *Magyar Könyvszemle* (Hungarian Book Review), albeit mainly regarding bookplates prior to 1900. At this time ex-libris were studied more from the aspect of bibliophilia and book collection - with the aim of either cataloguing the libraries of collectors or from an art historical point. The following authors' specialist works stand out from the ones on old Hungarian ex-libris: József Dankó, Elemér Varjú, László Siklóssy, Károly Lyka, Kálmán Arady, Oszkár Reich Milton, Rezső Soó, István Nyireő and Andor Semsey. The article published in 1895 in the columns of *Magyar Könyvszemle* by Elemér Varjú (1873–1944), art and cultural historian, is revolutionary. In it he emphasises the importance of expounding on cultural historical relations and the scholarly analysis of ex-libris.

The specialist publications concerning twentieth-century ex-libris appearing between 1920–1970 are summarised in Ferenc Galambos' work *A magyar ex-libris irodalom bibliográfiája 1920–1970*. (Bibliography of Hungarian ex-libris literature 1920-1970), Eger, 1972. Missing from Galambos' bibliography for being published later are the following comprehensive standard works: Anikó Deé Nagy: *A marosvásárhelyi Teleki-Bolyai Könyvtár ex-librisei* (Ex-libris from the Teleki-Bolyai library of Marosvásárhely), 2001, a work making known the ex-libris in the books of the Teleki collection; Hilda Horváth: *Magyar ex-librisek 1525–1985* (Hungarian ex-libris 1525-1985), 1985; and Péter Ürmös "Ex-libris a századfordulótól az ezredfordulóig" (Ex-libris from the turn of the century to the turn of the

millennium), a study published on the twentieth-century history of ex-libris in connection with the National Széchényi Library. In: *A Nemzeti Könyvtár Kisnyomtatványtára*. (The small prints collection of the National Library), ed. Mária Cseh, OSZK (National Széchényi Library), Budapest, 2002, Osiris Publishing, 115–147.

From among the doctoral dissertations on ex-libris the ones by the following authors stand out: Dr Kálmán Arady who researched old Hungarian bookplates: *Ex-libriseink a mohácsi vésztől 1900-ig* (Our ex-libris from the Battle of Mohács to 1900), Budapest, Pázmány Péter University, 1948; Dr. Hilda. Horváth, who presented the ex-libris art of the early twentieth century in *A magyar ex-libris művészet a XX. század elején* (Hungarian ex-libris art at the beginning of the twentieth century), Budapest, Eötvös Loránd University, 1986 and Dr. Enikő Pajor, who studied the ex-libris art of the first half of the twentieth century in her work entitled *A magyarországi ex-libris története a kezdetektől a második világháborúig* (The history of Hungarian ex-libris from the beginning to the Second World War), Budapest, Eötvös Loránd University, 1988. My dissertation fits alongside these works, giving - as indicated in its main title *The Meeting of Art, Science and Culture in the Subject Matter of Twentieth-Century Bookplates* - an overview of the entire twentieth century, focusing within the period on the second half of the century on the Hungarian aspects of a foreign collection set up in the 1960–70s. The study is not only novel in its subject but also in its approach, as it concentrates on features so far not analysed from a scholarly view (Hungary-related research, the collectors and commissioners, etc) – and with the cultural historian’s eye rather than the art historian’s.

To highlight from the foreign literature a few works which formed the background to the research: comprehensive monographs, studies (Butler, William E.: *American bookplates*, Primrose Hill Press, London, 2000; Rödel, Klaus: *Das heutige europäische Exlibris*, D.E.S., 1970.), specialist periodicals (*Graphia bulletin*, *Mitteilungen*, *Boekcier*, *Exlibris Wereld*, *Rossisky Exlibrisky Zhurnal*, etc.), and the series of works presenting the greatest bookplate artists of the twentieth and twenty-first century *Ex-Libris. Enciclopédia bio-bibliográfica da arte do ex-libris contemporâneo* (Encyclopaedia bio-bibliographical of the art of the contemporary ex-libris), edited by Artur Mário da Mota Miranda (Franciscana, Braga, 1985–, under continuous publication). The publications and catalogues printed for FISAE (Fédération Internationale des Sociétés d’Amateurs d’ Ex-Libris): *Artisti dell’exlibris /Artist of ex-libris*, I., B.N.E.L., Como, 1968.), and the series *Bibliografi över europaeiske kunstneres* (Exlibristen, 1969–), published by Klaus Rödel in the 1960–70s, also provided basic information concerning many of the people involved.

My research in comparison to my forerunners was aided by the slight distance in time, which always helps historians in the more objective assessment of a given era and its more comprehensive presentation.

Identifying ex-libris commissioners and owners while lacking in comprehensive works demanded special background research. My main source was the periodical *Kisgrafika*, published from 1962 onwards (in its original name *KBK Értesítő*, Bulletin of the Friends of Small Graphics, later *Kisgrafika Értesítő*) and its pertaining columns appearing periodically: *forum of collectors*, *new members*, *lists featuring change of address*, *exchange lists*, *obituaries*, special issues from 1994 and 1997 of the periodical *Kisgrafika* (“Magyar exlibris-gyűjtők arcképcsarnoka” - Portrait gallery of Hungarian ex-libris collectors, nos. 1-2), and the *jubilee yearbook* printed for the fiftieth anniversary of the Friends of Kisgrafika. Of the pertaining catalogues the work *A szovjet ex-libris 1917–1967* (The Soviet ex-libris) stands out (ed. S. G. Ivensky, Pál Bélley, National Széchényi Library, Budapest, 1967).

2/ Source documents to be found in *the archives of the Friends of Kisgrafika*, in *the Collection of Graphics and Small Prints of the National Széchényi Library* (bequest of *Lenke Diskay*), and in *the bequest of individual collectors* (such as *Andor Semsey*): *documents*, *records*, *statements*, *correspondence*, *archival sources*.

The archival material of KBK (Friends of Kisgrafika), in addition to enrolment forms, records and correspondence supplied numerous so far unpublished data principally regarding ex-libris collectors. The bequest of the great bookplate collector and specialist *Andor Semsey* in addition to the graphic work preserved in the National Széchényi Library, bequeathed by *Lenke Diskay*, complemented my research with further material (letters, invitations, tickets, catalogues, etc).

3/ *Internet websites*, *libraries*, *online access to museums*, *catalogues* and *specialist digital databases*.

In order to present the international context of the subject I present a picture of the ex-libris associations of the world, providing an organisational background to collecting. Documents of the websites of the associations, the International Federation of Ex-libris Societies, FISAE (www.fisae.org), the yearbooks and the available online documents of Hungarian and foreign press also served as sources. Affording a look into the ex-libris collections of over 100 libraries and museums over the world, I provide an ex-libris topography, the data and literature of which was obtained through websites, news bulletins of the given country's ex-libris association, its periodicals and online catalogues. I would like to highlight Maria Tetzlaff's book *Perspektiven für die Erschließung von Exlibris-Sammlungen*

unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek (Bibliotheks- und Medienmanagement, Bachelor-Arbeit, Stuttgart, 2008) on the subject of German ex-libris collections.

4/ *Other sources (contacts, correspondence, personal requests, participation at international ex-libris congresses).*

To establish an international context, beyond the so far mentioned research, I established contact with several foreign institutions (Yaroslavl Fine Arts Museum, Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts etc), and visited personally other venues: State Russian Library (Moscow), Ex-libris Museum of the International Association of Book Collectors (Moscow), IMOGA Museum (Istanbul) etc. Participating in two International FISAE Ex-libris Congresses – Thirty-third International FISAE Ex-libris Congress, 2010, Istanbul, Turkey; Thirty-fourth Congress, 2012, Naantali, Finland – further broadened my horizon on an international level and made it possible for me to involve additional people and sources.

Beyond the institutions, a vital part of my research work was looking up the individuals concerned, their descendents and acquaintances. Among those who supplied important data I would like to mention Lajos Palásthy, current secretary of KBK. In addition to him I would like to note down the names of Veronika Bánki, Csaba Katona, Gyula Kőhegyi, Mrs Andor Semsey, Antal Kopp, László Lázár Nagy, Pál Szölgyémy and Péter Ürmös, etc. From among the foreigners Klaus Rödel (Frederikshavn Kunstmuseum og Exlibrissamling, director), Gian Carlo Torre (Università degli Studi di Genova, professor), Nina Zharkova (Yaroslavl Fine Arts Museum, research fellow) and Nadia Morozova Derkas (Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, research fellow) provided me with significant information.

IV Function and structure of the chapters of the dissertation

In the *first, introductory chapter* I determine the *subject of research*, the corpus, its aims, main directions and methods, and outline the background literature.

Following this, in *chapters 2–4 which afford a historical overview* I present a conceptual and theoretical approach to ex-libris through its history (from the 16th century to the present day), summarizing the main changes in the commissioning and collecting of bookplates, the more famous book(plate) collectors and makers in a basically Hungarian context. I also expound on the institutionalised forms appearing in the twentieth century, the evolving of associations and the presentation of the Friends of Kisgrafika and its countrywide network. Besides individual ex-libris I also touch upon institutional examples from larger ex-libris

collections in Hungarian institutions. In the spirit of interdisciplinarity I point out new possibilities of interpretation emerging in the age of the postmodern, the effect of the “iconic turn” on bookplate interpretation and the concept of visual literacy. From the point of typifying ex-libris numerous new aspects are generated by the research that focuses on the possessor/owner feature of bookplates.

Following this, from the *fifth chapter* I place the subject within an *international context*, spanning the time from the first international congress, through the establishing of FISAE and its affiliated organisations, to the present day international world of ex-libris. I lay emphasis on the 13th International Ex-libris Congress (1970), whose venue was Hungary.

In *chapter six* I offer an *international ex-libris topography*, presenting the world’s largest ex-libris collections in museums and libraries, placing within this the material of the Rudomino Library which forms the source of the research.

From *chapter seven* onwards the paper deals with Hungariology and *ex-libris research*. *Beyond defining* Hungary-related ex-libris, I present the ex-libris corpus of foreign collections with a Hungarian link.

In *chapters 8-12* I expound on the detailed analysis of the Moscow *Rudomino Library* ex-libris collection, specifically those with a Hungarian connection, and present the collection from various angles, together with its points of connection.

I describe the location of research, the founder of the collection, the classification of the ex-libris material (chapter 8), its international aspects, its limits in space and time, the principal data (chapter 9), the method of cataloguing the material and the basis of assessment (chapter 10). In chapter 11, following the comprehensive presentation of the Hungarian graphic art scene of the 1960s and 70s as a background (chapter 11.1), I review the bookplates of the Moscow material designed for individuals (chapter 11.2), and institutions (chapter 11.3). In the course of this I touch upon the major types of Hungary-related ex-libris: works by Hungarian graphic artists (commissioned by Hungarians or foreigners), made for Hungarian owners (by Hungarian or foreign graphic artists), in Hungarian, and/or referring to Hungary. (Any one of these features qualify an ex-libris as related to Hungary). I lay special emphasis on taking stock of the Hungarian commissioners, the examining of which in a systemized manner in relation to the collection is a new field of research. I present the commissioners based on the frequency of their occurrence and according to their profession, and highlight the bookplates made for well-known Hungarians. An international context is also given by enlisting the foreign (mainly Polish, Russian, German, Italian, Swedish, Swiss, Dutch, Spanish, Czech, Belgian, Danish, etc) graphic artists and commissioners.

Besides ex-libris I also deal with *special graphics* and *in memoriam sheets* (chapter 11.4), which often overlap with the category of bookplates. Connected to this I present (chapter 11.5) *exceptional types of ex-libris*, special owner categories (universal ex-libris, *ipse fecit* sheets, pseudo ex-libris, etc).

The iconographic analysis from a cultural historical viewpoint further broadens the image of ex-libris as the tools of “*lieux de mémoire*” (chapter 11.6). Key groups based on the themes of bookplates are the following: depicting books or reading; of topographic themes; portraying grapes and wine or with gastronomic subjects; depicting women, erotic ex-libris; preserving ethnographic or literary tradition; literary memory and inter-textuality; mythological and historical subjects; emblematic bookplates indicating profession or referring to hobbies; suggesting collecting and pastimes; self-reflective ex-libris, referring to art; memory of famous people – portrait ex-libris.

Chapter 12 gives a summary of the presentation of the Hungary-related ex-libris of the Rudomino Library, the main results, further directions and possibilities of research.

Chapter 13, referring back to the subject of the entire dissertation, assesses the cultural historical approach to ex-libris, its points of contact between art, science and culture, and the aspects and possibilities I indicate in the paper.

The dissertation is concluded (*chapters 14-16*) with bibliography and appendices (tables, diagrams and illustrations).

V Formulating the results of research and the theses

The statement, according to which the interpretation of ex-libris as visual documents exceeds the examination of the expressive tools of fine art, is of an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary nature, and through analysis provides rich additional material in countless areas of our cultural and scientific life, has proved fully justified. In the “reading” of the pictures and their cultural reception the cultural historical context plays a major role, the presentation of which with regards to ex-libris signifies a novel approach, a new method of examination and numerous so-far unexplored aspects.

I give a more comprehensive picture, surpassing past endeavours, of the *ex-libris stock* to be found in *institutions (libraries and museums)*. *These collections* can be ranked according to the following *types*: general collections, old (chiefly heraldic) prints, those classified according to theme, printing technique and typography, arranged by the artists, arranged by

nationality and collections of sheets where the term “ex-libris” has been replaced by a Latin term (ex numismaticis, ex musicis, ex eroticis, ex graficis, etc).

The systematic cataloguing and presenting of the Hungary-related ex-libris of the Rudomino All Russian State Library for Foreign Literature as a collection highlighted from the viewpoint of the dissertation and the corpus of research is of key significance as outlined in the above. By cataloguing the stock and analysing it I offer an example of *elaborating and further researching* the (Hungary-related) *ex-libris of the collection from as uniform a standpoint as possible*.

From among the results of my work, identifying of the establisher of the collection (the Russian Yevgeny Nikolaevich Minaev) was of key importance.

The *arrangement* of the Minaev-collection shows a wide international spectrum, featuring the following countries: England, Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, Netherlands, Japan, Yugoslavia, Canada, China, Poland, Hungary, Germany, Norway, Italy, Romania, Spain, Switzerland, Sweden, Soviet Union and the USA. Within this list Hungary represents an outstanding proportion, demonstrating the powerful Hungarian-Russian relationship during the period in question, which in the case of the Hungary-related ex-libris of the Rudomino Library is the *1960s and 70s*. During this time we can witness the enlivening of the world of ex-libris on an international scale too (establishing of associations, setting up of FISAE, publishing specialist periodicals, etc). The activity of the Friends of Kisgrafika, founded in Hungary in 1959, also fits in with this. The organisation was on good terms with the Russian Minaev, whose carefully studied ex-libris corpus can be the model both for collections arranged according to an international system and for Hungary-related research.

Principal results of cataloguing the Hungary-related *ex-libris*: from among the 4585 small graphics of the Minaev-collection preserved in the Rudomino Library 784 have a Hungarian connection, 17.1% of the total, which is a significant proportion. The 39 files arranged by countries contain in total 3911 ex-libris and special graphics. Five of the files are wholly related to Hungary: N11 (92 items), N19 (80 items), N21 (63 items), N22 (106 items) and N38 (102 items). Besides this the majority of file N8 also turned out to be Hungarian material: 50 specimens of the 75 are Hungary-related. Overall, out of the 3911 small graphics of files *N1–N39, 778 items are Hungary-related*. Added to this are the 6 Hungary-related works of the 674 small graphics that can be found in the 32 – mainly German and Austrian - free-page albums. Thus the total number of *Hungary-related ones* amounts to 784.

Regarding the ex-libris designers in the Minaev-collection, there are a total of 80 *ex-libris* by internationally renowned Hungarian graphic artists. The greatest number of them are the works of Antal Fery, István Drahos, Béla Stettner, Ferenc Bordás, Jenő Kertes-Kollmann, József Menyhárt, László Lázár Nagy, Dezső Takács, Arisztid Nagy, etc. The total of 677 ex-libris by Hungarian artists give a comprehensive picture of the bookplate art of the 1960s and 70s.

During the analysis we can also form a picture of the Hungarian “centres” where bookplates were commissioned. These are the following with their respective examples: Budapest and its environs (Béla Stettner), Szerencs and its environs (Antal Fery), Szeged (György Buday), Debrecen (József Menyhárt) and beyond the borders of Hungary, Zenta (Károly Andruskó).

According to my research with respect to the foreign relations of Hungary-related bookplates the following nationalities featured among the designers of ex-libris for Hungarians and those commissioning work from Hungarian graphic artists: Russian, Polish, German, Austrian, Czech, Belgian, Dutch, Swiss, French, Estonian, Danish, Swedish and Italian, etc. Among the *foreign designers* working for Hungarian collectors 36 artists can be found in the Rudomino Library, with a total of 109 ex-libris and special graphics. The greatest number of works were made by J. Suskiewicz, B. J. Tomecki, F. Kühn, J. N. Tyihanovich, F. von Bayros, J. N. Goljakovsky, etc.

From the standpoint of exlibrisological research, the investigation of the collectors and the book(plate) owners themselves within the entire collection is a new field. I undertook this examination with regards to the Hungarian commissioners of the Rudomino material on a quantitative level. From the 377 “owners” featured on the small graphics I excluded the foreign collectors or the sheets made for institutions and the ones that were difficult to identify (featuring initials or only a family or first name). Thus from the 252 Hungarian owners 230 people made up the object of research. As a result of several years of study, 180 people could be linked to a name (such as a relation of the commissioner), while the profession of 165 of them could also be identified. As far as the identity of the remaining persons was concerned, neither the examined sources (enrolment forms, KBK membership lists, exchange lists, encyclopaedias, inventories, etc.) nor the literature could offer any stable proof, and neither were there personal contacts to identify them. There are several reasons for this: the dying out of a family, the descendants’ lack of interest in the subject, and the scanty available papers and data, chiefly on the collectors of ex-libris.

An outstanding number of sheets were commissioned by the following people: István Réthy (68), Ferenc Galambos (45), Andor Semsey (34), István Szigeti (22). A greater number of works are represented by bookplates made for Ferenc Bordás (11), László Petrikovits (11), László Gombos (9 db), Dénes Kertész (9), István Erdélyi (7), Antal Fery (5), Dániel Árpád Nagy (5), Dezső Nagy (5), Júlia Réthy (5), Pál Szölgyémy (5), András Semsey (5). The following names stand out among the famous Hungarian collectors: István Réthy, Ferenc Galambos, Andor Semsey, and István Szigeti. From among the well-known figures who however were not engaged in a broad activity of ex-libris collecting I found the following József Berda (1902–1966) poet, Géza Hofi (1936–2002) actor, comedian, Jenő Jandó (1952–) pianist, Zoltán Kodály (1882–1967) composer, folk music researcher, Endre Szász (1926–2003) painter, graphic artist, Gyula Ortutay (1910–1978) ethnographer, politician concerned with culture, Miklós Radnóti (1909–1944) poet and Count Mihály Károlyi (1875–1955) statesman.

The division of the collectors according to their profession and social-demographic study shows the following results of quantitative research. The collectors and their organisational base, the members of Friends of Kisgrafika, can be divided into three categories: artist, collector and patron. Owing to the fact that the KBK functioned primarily as an association of graphic artists who often made bookplates for themselves, the artists were also collectors. It is thus understandable why it is fine artists who are featured in the greatest number in the Rudomino material (34). They are followed by doctors (18), engineers (13), writers and poets (12), lawyers (12), officials (8), reciters (8), librarians (6), technicians and technical specialists (5), heads of institutions (5), journalists (4), print workers (4) and students (4). Two people respectively represent the following categories: composers, skilled labourers, priests (vicars), art historians, economists. Only one person stands for the following categories: politician, numismatist, accountant, publisher, soldier, pharmacist, translator, film director and designers.

Besides fine artists, teachers, librarians, reciters and people engaged in books and literature represent a large proportion of commissioners. Doctors, engineers and lawyers as patrons are also represented in significant numbers.

The function of marking out the owner comes to the fore chiefly in bookplates that refer to occupations (and hobbies). This large ratio is proved in the chapter on the professions of ex-libris commissioners. This type of bookplate in many cases served as the point of departure for identifying the owner.

Nonetheless the material of the Rudomino Library presented a relatively narrow corpus of research: bookplate commissioners in a specific foreign collection, focusing on the 1960s and 70s. For this reason when categorising by profession I deemed that a more detailed presentation from a variety of angles was needed, and introduced two further groups of sources: the data obtained from the *Enrolment list of the Friends of Kisgrafika (1959-2003)* and the *occupational statistics of the members of the Friends from 1971* as national rates.

The comparative analysis of the data measured at three different times and in different situations shows the spread of bookplate owners in the second half of the 20th century according to their professions from various cross sections, complementing each other from certain viewpoints. On the other hand the comparative examination of the three investigations was hampered by a number of aspects (the only partial coverage of the analysed period and the qualitative and quantitative differences of the corpora). Nonetheless, there was agreement in several of the following points. The prevalence of those with intellectual occupations is striking. The great number of fine artists is in accordance with the hypothesis; in the Rudomino material 20.6%, according to the 1971 occupational statistics of the Friends 25.2% and based on the enrolment forms of the Friends (1959–2003) 17.6%. Teachers, writers, engineers, librarians, doctors, lawyers, directors, health care employees, vicars and priests, journalists and reciters are also represented in a greater ratio. The joining of a relatively large number of officials and clerks in the 1960s and 70s is thanks to socialist cultural policy.

The so far drawn conclusions cannot be generalised for every period, and basically reflect the social conditions of the latter part of the 20th century. The wide range of occupations shows the widespread activity of collecting and commissioning bookplates, aided at the time by the founding of the Friends of Kisgrafika in 1959, and in its wake the series of popularizing lectures, exhibitions, publications and catalogues on an international level.

With regards to the sexual division of Hungarian commissioners we experience a male dominance. In the case of the Rudomino material from the 246 sexually identifiable individual names 170 are men and 76 are women, that is, the proportion of men exceeds 2/3 (69% – 31%). The data of the 1959–2003 enrolment lists shows a slight increase in women: the 314 men to 192 women indicate a ratio of 62.06% to 37.94%. That is to say, the proportion of the two sexes in the national statistics is closer, and shows a smaller difference in comparison to the data from the Rudomino.

As far as their age is concerned the ex-libris collectors and the members of the Friends tend to be middle aged and older. This is also backed up by the examined enrolment lists. The majority of them, 18 members, joined at the age of 30, while 26 people joined at the age of

34. According to the data most of the members joined the Friends between 26 and 70, that is, the number of students in relation to those employed is insignificant (in the material from the Rudomino it is no more than 2.4%). To this day the pensioner age group is represented by a large number.

The commissioners of Hungary-related ex-libris in the Minaev-collection grouped by nationality show an extremely high ratio of *Hungarians* (75%) in comparison to foreigners (25%). Further conclusions can be drawn from *categorising the foreign commissioners* – for whom Hungarian graphic artists made ex-libris – *by nationality*, where data is available, together with their occupations. 140 ex-libris were made for foreigners, totalling 85 owners. The diversity of languages also indicates the varied nationalities. The following commissioners feature with the most bookplates: S. G. Ivensky (10), A. Leier (9), P. Pfister (5), K. V. Merzin (5), P. Ambur (4), H. Blokland (4), S. Kotarski (4), E. Kuiv (4), K. Rödel (4), L. M. Zhitomirsky (4), G. Mantero (3).

The division according to nationality of the identifiable 69 *foreign commissioners* is the following. Italians come top with 14.4%, then the Germans with 13.04%, serving as proof of the reputation of Hungarian designers in these countries. The 10.14% for Russians and the Dutch is also significant, but as the collection in question is Russian their high number is understandable. They are followed by Danes, Estonians and Poles at 8.7%, then Belgians, Austrians and French at 4.35%. Portuguese and Slovenians amount to 2.9%. At the end of the list come Finns, Serbs, Czechs, Greeks and Japanese at 1.45%, that is, with one ex-libris respectively. This data proves the considerable fame Hungarian graphic art and Hungarian designers had on an international scale.

On the basis of the survey conducted in the Rudomino Library the proportion of bookplates made for individuals vs. institutions is the following: from among the 377 owners merely 8 are purely institutional, making up a trifling 2.12%. These institutional bookplates consist of 4 pieces for libraries, 1 for a school, 1 for a museum and 1 for an association. This low percentage falls behind the data of the other two surveys to an only negligible extent. The survey of the 1971 Friends membership, according to which 10 libraries, 2 schools and 4 museums belonged as institutional members to the 308 members, amounting to 5.19%, can be grounds for comparison. In the light of the enrolment forms of the Friends (1959–2003) out of 540 members, 34 are institutional members, which are made up of 23 libraries, 6 museums, 3 clubs, 1 study group and 1 council. Their total proportion comes to 6.29%. The data of all three surveys supports the considerably smaller (below 7%) participation in the world of ex-libris in comparison to the individual members and commissioners. Besides this the reason for

the small number of pieces made for institutions is also due to the fact that this type of bookplate – like institutional ex-libris in general – is less likely to end up in a private collection.

The joint presence of ex-libris *and special graphics* (that is small graphics for particular occasions, events or anniversaries) is a customary phenomenon in collections, and their distinction is almost impossible as the two types often overlap each other. The special graphics found in the Minaev-collection (138 pieces) can be divided into the following groups according to their type: *in memoriam sheets, hommage sheets, small graphics for engagement, marriage, and wedding anniversaries, congress sheets, book festival small graphics, sheets for exhibitions, Easter cards, Christmas and New Year cards, notifications of birth, celebrating birthdays, on the founding of something, exchange sheets, congratulatory and invitation cards*. The most numerous of these are New Year greeting cards (53) and congress sheets (48), followed by the in memoriam (10) and marriage (7) cards. The large number of special graphics made for the 13th International ex-libris congress in Budapest can be explained by the fact that the congress in 1970 was the event where the greatest number of ex-libris commissioners (and graphic artists) of the Rudomino Library were present together.

The background to portraying the Rudomino Hungary-related bookplates as tools of “*lieux de memoire*” is constituted by their typological examination from an iconographic view. Ex-libris as living museums and “places of memory” by recording Hungarian cultural treasures and nurturing national remembrance not only construct but also mould tradition. By interpreting these works the beholder also has a role in shaping the national memory and cult. The iconography of ex-libris as visual messages gives an insight into the world of history of culture, social history, literature, architecture, religion and music, affording a means of access between different academic fields. The main thematic groups are: portraying books, topographical (presenting landscapes or buildings), connected to grapes and wine and meals, erotic bookplates depicting women, preserving an ethnographic-literary tradition or mythological-historical themes and bookplates referring self-consciously to art and self-portraits. Also widespread are bookplates showing the commissioners’ occupation or hobby with a characteristic symbol, or allegorical works evoking abstract principals and myths that are part of our common cultural heritage.

To sum up: ex-libris are small graphics with concise messages - interpretable within the inter-referential relations of text and image - and frequently bearing symbolic content, the researching of which calls for knowledge from a number of branches of science. Ex-libris research in today’s world of visual culture has to gain new emphasis and viewpoints, at the

centre of which stands its function of transmitting values. By presenting part of a foreign collection from a Hungary-related slant with novel approaches and illustrating numerous new aspects of research potentials my purpose is to show new directions in exlibrisology, both in a Hungarian and an international context, that is, a kind of pioneering work. The object of research, the ex-libris material found in the Department of Rare Books of the Rudomino Library, through its Hungary-related relations, offers an insight into the Hungarian art life of the 20th century. At the same time, however, placing the subject in a broader context, it also paints a picture of the ex-libris scene of many different countries, while acquainting the reader with various organizations, cultural institutions and the great figures of scholarly and cultural life.

PUBLICATIONS LINKED TO THE SUBJECT OF THE DISSERTATION

STUDIES:

- “Beszédes ex-librisek: a kultúra nemzetközi hírnökei” (Ex-libris with a story: international heralds of culture), *Magyar Grafika* (Hungarian Graphic Art), February 2011, LV/1, 75–78.
- “Beszédes ex-librisek: a kultúra nemzetközi hírnökei” (Ex-libris with a story: international heralds of culture), part I, *Kisgrafika* (Small Graphics), 2011/no. 1, 4–7.
- “Beszédes ex-librisek: a kultúra nemzetközi hírnökei” (Ex-libris with a story: international heralds of culture), part II, *Kisgrafika*, 2011/no. 2, 4–6.
- “Az ex-librisek művelődéstörténeti jelentősége” (Significance of bookplates from a cultural historical point of view), *Könyv, könyvtár, könyvtáros* (Books, Libraries, Librarians), vol. 20, no. 8, Aug. 2011, 45–61.)
- “A modern ex-libris a vizuális kultúra korában – egy hungarika vonatkozású gyűjtemény üzenete” (Modern bookplates in the age of visual culture – the message of a Hungary-related collection), *Magyar Könyvszemle* (Hungarian Book Review), 2011/no. 3, 359–377.
- “Az ex-librisek interpretációjának új irányai, ex-libris és hungarikakutatás” (New directions of ex-libris interpretations; ex-libris and Hungary-related research), In. *Szöveg-émlék-kép* (Text-Image-Memento), Bibliotheca Nationalis Hungariae, Gondolat Publishing, Budapest, 2011, 296–313.
- “Az ex-libris mint a művelődéstörténeti kutatások forrása” (Bookplates as a source for cultural studies), *Kisgrafika*, 2011/no. 4, 3–5.

“A moszkvai Rudomino Könyvtár hungarika ex-libriseinek ikonográfiája” (Iconography of the Hungary-related bookplates of the Rudomino Library of Moscow), *Magyar Könyvszemle* (Hungarian Book Review), 2012/no. 1, 93–112.

REVIEWS:

“Linked to the Italian catalogue AEM una storia per immagini (Gli ex-libris narrano 100 anni di storia)”, *Kisgrafika*, 2011/no. 2, 14.

“Gyermek ex-librisek Szlovéniában” (Children’s bookplates in Slovenia), *Kisgrafika*, 2011/no. 3, 13.

ARTICLES:

“Az ex-libris kortárs művészei; Nemzetközi ex-libris kiállítás Debrecenben” (Contemporary artists of ex-libris; the first international bookplate exhibition of Debrecen), *Kisgrafika* 2009/no. 3, 2.

“Kultúrák közti párbeszéd, avagy hungarika ex-librisek a moszkvai Rudomino Könyvtárban” (Intercultural communication or Hungarian-related ex-libris plates at Rudomino Library, Moscow), *Kisgrafika*, 2010/no. 3, 6–8.

“Miről vallanak az ex-librisek?” (What do bookplates reveal?), In. *Életgyümölcsök* (Fruits of Life) 2011. Novum pro Anthology, Novum Publishing Ltd. 2011, 421–426.

“Ex-librisek határok nélkül” (Die Buchzeichen ohne Grenzen), In. *Novum scripture*, ed. Wolfgang Bader. Novum pro Publishing, 2011, 229–235.

“A XXXIV. FISAE Nemzetközi Ex-libris Kongresszus (2012) egy résztvevő szemével” (FISAE XXXIVth International Ex-Libris Congress /2012/ an account from a participant), *Kisgrafika*, 2012/no. 3, 2–3.